

Testimony of Katie Trauner, UCONN MSW Student

In support of HB 6932 An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave

Good Afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Vice Chairs Osten and Cuevas, Ranking Members and Members of the committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my personal testimony today in favor of AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY LEAVE. I am here today as a student, a daughter and a mother. I am the perfect example of someone who would be considered "the sandwich generation". I have the responsibility of caring for two young pre-school children as well as two aging parents. In 2008 my mother was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma the same year as my daughter was born. Her condition quickly went from bad to worse and in winter of 2010, the year my son was born, she was lucky enough to receive the gift of a stem cell transplant. My mother's illness was a life changing event for our entire family. My father was forced to retire early as his employer could not give him the amount of time off that he would need to take care of my mother. Both of my parents have always worked and have never needed to ask for help in any way. Between countless hospital stays and treatments to fight the cancer and a 6 week stay in the hospital after her transplant my father had used up all his time at work and they were financially depleted. Knowing that my mother was dying and facing the fact that the transplant was not a guarantee we all wanted to spend as much time with her as we possibly could to support her and each other. We rallied as a family both emotionally and financially. My sister, brother and I worked hard to make sure they had everything they needed so that they were able to focus on recovery. Being proud it was hard for them to ask for and difficult for them to accept any help. If there was a system in place such as Paid Family Leave my dad would have been able to keep his job, his dignity and still care for his wife. Devastating illness affects

the entire family. HB 6932 would give families the time they need to support each other and still keep their financial independence. Thank you for allowing me the time to share my personal story.